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one, which still require Greek, and what Greek stands for, in order to the A. B. degree. If I may venture on a prophecy, he who speaks to you in my place ten years hence will be able to congratulate you on the additional number of Institutions requiring Greek for the A. B. degree. Not that I would have all students study Greek, but that I would have Greek taught in all higher Institutions, and I would have no Institution empowered to grant the A. B. degree in which Greek is not taught. I would have that which Greek stands for and of which it is in all history the finest embodiment and expression diffused through the atmosphere and the life of every Institution, reaching into the brain and heart of every student in every department, banishing what is coarse and mean and sensual, and bringing in sweetness and light and all the fine things of the spirit. What a right public judgment misses, what a growing thoughtful judgment is demanding, is more high and fine thinking, more imagination, more humanity, more spirituality, in fine more culture in the teaching and the life of our Institutions of learning.

C. K.

THE CLASSICAL ELEMENT IN GRAY'S POETRY¹

The poet Gray was accounted by his friends the most learned man of his time. If omniscience was not his foible, it was acknowledged as his possession, with the exception of mathematics, his ignorance of which he deplored. One does not need profound learning in order to recognize him as the scholar-poet, and to one who has an acquaintance with the great works of ancient and modern literature every line of Gray is reminiscent of some earlier poet. Yet with all this erudition he has written one thing which is perhaps the best known short single poem "in the world, written between Milton and Wordsworth". I here quote Edmund Gosse, Gray's latest biographer, who says again "The Elegy may be looked upon as the typical piece of English verse, our poem of poems". The "exquisite felicities", as Gosse loves to call them, of this poem and of the last part of the Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College have become in the interchange of daily speech as fully common property as the usual Shakespearean quotations. In this respect, as Gosse says, the poems have suffered from an excess of popularity.

Yet with all his learning and with all his recognition by the *vulgus profanum* of the unlettered, Gray has still not had Sappho's good fortune in becoming a poet beloved of poets. Gosse is far from right when he maintains that Swinburne is the only writer of authority since the death of Johnson who has ventured to depreciate Gray's poetry. Birkbeck Hill has assembled in his notes on Johnson's Life of Gray the adverse criticisms of many a fellow craftsman which support the harsh verdict of "The Great Bear"² himself. Coleridge, for

example, finds his poems "frigid and artificial". Carlyle calls them a "laborious mosaic through the hard, stiff lineaments of which little life or true grace could be expected to look". Hazlitt finds his Pindaric odes stately and pedantic, a kind of methodical borrowed frenzy. Wordsworth says that he "failed as a poet not because he took too much pains, but because his pains were of the wrong sort". "He wrote English verse", says Wordsworth, "as his brother Eton school-boys wrote Latin, filching a phrase now from one author and now from another. I do not profess to be a person of very various reading; nevertheless, if I were to pluck out of Gray's tail all the feathers which I know belong elsewhere, he would be left bare indeed".

Wordsworth's harsh description, it cannot be denied, sets forth the method which Gray consciously or unconsciously pursued. But his genius has made the results great and noble poetry. A remark of his in a letter to Horace Walpole is of great significance. He writes "I send you a bit of a thing for two reasons; first because it is one of your favorite's, Mr. M. Green; and next because I would do justice; the thought on which my second Ode turns is manifestly stole from thence. Not that I knew it at the time, but having seen this many years before, to be sure it imprinted itself on my memory and, forgetting the author, I took it for my own". There is a resemblance that is not without its meaning between Gray's poetical workmanship and that of Horace described by the latter in his Pindar ode:

ego apud Matinae
more modoque
grata carpentis thyma per laborem
plurimum circa nemus uvidique
Tiburis ripas operosa parvus
carmina fingo.

At the present time it is a very usual thing to say about Gray that he is Greek in his poetic art. Gosse finds that he is Simonidean in his gift of pure cold song and Palgrave writes that he is "reminded of Sophocles or Pindar by Gray's splendid odes". This judgment appears to me peculiarly inapt and a somewhat close study of the sources of Gray's poetic thought and phrasing confirms me in the belief that Gray is influenced by the Latin literature far more than by the Greek and that in his English verse as in his Latin his great masters are Vergil, Horace and Lucretius. His contemporary, William Collins, has the Greek feeling in his directness and sincerity. Comparing him with Gray Swinburne says "as a lyric poet Gray is unworthy to sit at the feet of Collins". But Collins with all his points of contact with Gray stands alone in the eighteenth century. Gray's qualities, whether you call them "exquisite felicities" with Gosse or "cumbrous splendors" and "rhetorical elaborations" with Johnson and Swinburne, are characteristic of that century and eminently Latin, as I hope to show somewhat in de-

¹ This paper was read at the Fourth Annual Meeting of The Classical Association of the Atlantic States at New York City, April 23, 1910.

² Gray's name for Johnson.

tail. The great English sources of his style among his predecessors are Milton and Pope. It is sometimes difficult to decide whether he has got his classical phrases at first-hand or through the medium of their poetry.

Gosse finds that Gray first shows his Greek quality in the Ode to Adversity. "Perhaps the fragments of such lyrists as Simonides", Gosse writes, "gave Gray the hint of this pure and cold manner of writing. The shadowy personages of allegory throng around us and we are not certain that we distinguish them from one another". "These shadowy personages of allegory", however, are borrowed from Horace's Ode to Fortune or suggested by that Ode, and Gray's use of them is reminiscent of Horace and Vergil rather than of the Greek lyric poets. Simonides has nothing like this. Gray's poem, also, owes its inception and some of its best lines to an English translation of a Graeco-Roman ode of the reign of Hadrian, written by a Cretan Greek, Mesomedes, who was music-master at the Roman court of Hadrian and Marcus Antoninus. This Greek ode was long attributed to Dionysius, but was vindicated for Mesomedes by Burette in the *Histoire de l'academie des inscriptions et belles lettres* (1729). Mesomedes according to notices of him in Eusebius and Jerome was a protégé of Hadrian and wrote a eulogy of Antinous. Antoninus raised a tomb to him, though according to Julius he had at one time in a fit of economy reduced his salary. Of his hymns three have come down with their musical notation, namely, To the Muse, To the Sun, To Nemesis.

Although Gray in a prefatory note states that his Ode to Adversity was suggested by Dionysius's (sic) Ode to Nemesis, his indebtedness to the translation has been, I believe, entirely overlooked. James Merrick, a scholar and religious poet of Gray's own time translates the Greek verses thus (Bell's *Fugitive Poetry*, 18161)¹:

Nemesis, whose dreaded weight
Turns the scale of human fate,
On whose front black terrors dwell,
Daughter dire of Justice, hail!
Thou whose adamantine rein
Curbs the arrogant and vain,
Wrong and force before thee die,
Envy shuns thy searching eye,
And, her sable wings outspread,
Flies to hide her hated head
When thy wheel with restless round
Runs along the unprinted ground.
Humbled then at thy decree
Human greatness bows the knee.
Thine it is unseen to trace
Step by step each mortal's pace,
Thine the sons of pride to check
And to bind the stubborn neck.
'Till our lives directed stand

By the measure in thy hand
Thou observant sitst on high
With bent brow and steadfast eye
Weighing all that meets thy view
In thy balance just and true.
Goddess, look propitious down,
View us not without a frown,
Nemesis whose dreaded weight
Turns the scale of human fate.
Nemesis be still our theme,
Power immortal and supreme!
Thee we praise, nor thee alone
But add the partner of thy throne;
Thee and Justice both we sing,
Justice whose unwearied wing
Rears aloft the virtuous name
Safe from hell's voracious claim,
And when thou thy wrath hast shed
Turns it from the virtuous head.

This translation, which misses the meaning of the Greek in several places and overtranslates it in others, has in spite of the droning monotony of the meter a certain dignity of phrase. Neither the Greek hymn of Mesomedes nor the Reverend James Merrick's translation of it is in any sense great poetry. But we owe to them ultimately Wordsworth's great Ode to Duty, which in the opinion of Swinburne and many others outranks the Ode to Immortality.

Gray has transformed the verses

Thou whose adamantine rein
Curbs the arrogant and vain

into

Bound in thine adamantine chain
The proud are taught to taste of pain.

The next line

And purple tyrants vainly groan

is adapted from Horace's Ode to Fortune

purpurei metuunt tyranni.

From Horace he also gets the material for his fourth stanza

Scared at thy frown terrific fly
Self-pleasing Folly's idle brood,
Wild Laughter, Noise, and thoughtless Joy,
And leave us leisure to be good.
Light they disperse and with them go
The summer friend, the flatt'ring foe;
By vain Prosperity received
To her they vow their truth and are again believed.

Horace writes

at volgus infidum et meretrix retro
periura cedit, diffugiunt cadis
cum faece siccatis amici
ferre iugum pariter dolosi.

The attendants of Adversity in Gray's poem are suggested by Horace.

Wisdom in sable garb array'd
Immersed in rapturous thought profound,
And Melancholy, silent maid,
With leaden eye, that loves the ground,
Still on thy solemn steps attend:
Warm Charity, the general friend,
With Justice, to herself severe,
And Pity dropping soft the sadly-pleasing tear.

¹ For the Greek text of Mesomedes's hymn see *Musici Scriptores Graeci*, edited by Carolus Jan (Leipzig, 1895).

Fortune in Horace is attended by *saeva Necessitas* with her stern emblems, and by Hope and "white-robed Honor, too seldom seen".

The last two stanzas of Gray go back to the translation of the Greek hymn of Mesomedes and are an expansion of the lines

Goddess, look propitious down,
View us not without a frown.

The best stanza is the last and far outdoes Horace with his prayer for Caesar's preservation and his irrelevant pessimism:

Thy form benign, oh goddess, wear,
Thy milder influence impart,
Thy philosophic train be there
To soften, not to wound my heart.
The generous spark extinct revive,
Teach me to love and to forgive,
Exact mine own defects to scan,
What others are to feel, and know myself a man.

To this we owe those wonderful lines of the Ode, to Duty:

Stern Lawgiver! but thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace,
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face.
Flowers laugh before thee in their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads.
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong
And the most ancient heavens
Through thee are fresh and strong.

Since by Wordsworth's own confession this perfect ode of his is modelled on Gray's ode, we may well wonder at Wordsworth's gibe about the feathers that could be plucked from Gray, leaving him so bare. To pluck this perfect poem from Wordsworth because he has taken form, meter, and tone from Gray would be no more unfair than to condemn Gray, as Wordsworth has done, for filching, to use Wordsworth's odious word. If there is filching in the case of either poet, both are, as Swinburne called Milton, "celestial thieves" and repay to the world a thousandfold what they have taken from their brother-poets. Wordsworth in his Ode reaches a height of perfection that is as great as that of Sophocles or Aeschylus and greater for us because the poem is freed from mythology, with no alien Zeus or goddess Dike or Moira. Wordsworth indeed deserves to be ranked by this Ode and his other great one with those poets of Greece of whom Matthew Arnold says at the close of his essay on Religious Sentiment: "No other poets who have so well satisfied the thinking power have so well satisfied the religious sense". But, as I have already said, I do not feel that Gray's intellectual compeers are Simonides, Pindar, Sophocles, and Aeschylus, but rather the thoughtful and philosophical among the Latin poets, Vergil and Lucretius above all. The ode of Mesomedes has reminiscences of Aeschylean thought and phrase, slight though it is. But Gray's

Ode to Adversity is not Aeschylean in feeling; rather it is a sententious and allegorical poem in the Latin style of Horace, ennobled and raised above the moralizing of that cheerful worldling by the Vergilian sense of tears in human things, which is so marked in the work of Gray.

I have considered the Ode of Adversity first, out of its chronological order, because of the fact that it so directly follows a Latin and a Greek poem. The Ode to Spring is his earliest ode. It was sent to his friend West before Gray was informed of the latter's death. This poem is suggested by Horace 1.4 *Solvitur acris hiems grata vice veris et Favoni*, and in it Gray's muse is entirely Latin and Horatian, not yet touched with the Vergilian tenderness and melancholy, as in the deeper notes of later poems. Faint echoes of the gorgeousness of the *Pervigilium Veneris* appear in the first stanza

Lo! where the rosy-bosom'd Hours,
Fair Venus' train, appear,
Disclose the long-expecting flowers
And wake the purple year!

This is a version chilled and diluted by transference from the torrid zone to the mists and fogs of Britain of these lines of that tropical poem:

Ver novum, ver iam canorum, ver renatus orbis est,
ipsa geminis purpurantem pingit annum floribus,
ipsa surgentes papillas de Favoni spiritu
urget in nodos feraces.

The line *ipsa geminis purpurantem*, etc., Gray translates again in the reference to Shakespeare in the Progress of Poetry:

This pencil take, she said, whose colours clear
Richly paint the vernal year.

Gosse criticizes Gray for borrowing "rosy-bosomed Hours" from Milton and "purple year" from Pope. But Gray is acquainted with Pope's source and mildly paraphrases, as I said, that burning poem.

I have already spoken of Gray's writing to Walpole that he had got from Green's Grotto the moral on which the poem turns. Green's verse is

While insects from the threshold preach.

Gray's moralizing in this Ode is of the Horatian sort. The insects say

On hasty wings thy youth is flown;
Thy sun is set, thy spring is gone—
We frolic while 'tis May.

Such thoughts, too, the spring suggests to Horace:

O beati Sesti,
vitae summa brevis spem nos vetat incohare longam.
.....
Immortalia ne speres, monet annus et alium
quae rapit hora diem.

The Ode is compacted of Horace, diluted lines from the Pervigilium Veneris, and classical phrases borrowed from Milton and Pope.

The Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College shows the same sources of vocabulary. The Latin impress is marked in lines 61-80:

These shall the fiery Passion tear,
The vultures of the mind,
Disdainful Anger, Pallid Fear,
And Shame that skulks behind.

The closest parallel to this is Vergil's band of monsters, tormenting soul and body, assembled at the gates of Hell (Aeneid 6.273ff.):

Vestibulum ante ipsum, primus in faucibus Orci
Luctus et ultrices posuere cubilia Curae,
pallentesque habitant Morbi tristisque Senectus
et Metus et malesuada Fames ac turpis Egestas,
terribiles visu formae, Letumque Labosque,
tum consanguineus Leti Sopor, et mala mentis
Gaudia, mortiferumque adverso in limine Bellum
ferreque Eumenidum thalami, et Discordia demens
vipereum crinem vittis innexa cruentis.

Vergil's splendid passage is taken from a stupid mythological genealogy in the Theogony of Hesiod and his golden touch has made poetry out of Hesiod's dull verse. Gray has reproduced the Vergilian *ἦθος* and has made it thoroughly his own. It is true that some of his best adjectives for his "grisly troop" are obtained from Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, and Dryden, but the passage as a whole goes back to Vergil.

The famous verses of the last stanza are perhaps more often quoted, if that can be, even than the Elegy. They have all the Vergilian "piety, gravity, and sweetness"¹ that is so characteristic of Gray at his highest. I have found an exact parallel to the last three in a fragment of Euripides quoted by Stobaeus, Florilegium, as from Euripides's Antiope:

φρονῶ δ' ὁ πᾶσχω καὶ τόδ' οὐ μικρὸν κακόν,
τὸ μὴ εἰδέναι γὰρ ἡδονὴν ἔχει τινὰ
νοσοῦντα, κέρδος δ' ἐν κακοῖς ἀγνωσία.

I think of what I suffer, and this is great distress,
For ignorance brings bliss in wretchedness and gain it
is in sorrow not to know.

The thought is a commonplace and parallels can be brought from many sources. This is, however, the closest that I know. Whether the passage in Euripides was known to Gray or not, it is significant of his style that he reproduces consciously or unconsciously the great *sententiae* of moralizers on human life like Euripides and Horace, but impresses them with Vergilian sweetness and gravity.

A study of the two Pindaric Odes also shows affiliation with Latin authors rather than Greek. True, in the Progress of Poetry, there is a fine translation of Pindar's first Pythian, but the lines that follow are full of reminiscences of the Latin poets,

Horace, Vergil, and Catullus. The Bard, though called a Pindaric Ode, has no parallel in Pindar, and Dr. Johnson, following Algarotti, attributed it to Horace 1.15, the prophecy of Nereus. The correctness of this was admitted by Gray, who writes: "The Review I have read and admire it, particularly the observation that the Bard is taken from *Pastor quum traheret*, and the advice to be more original".

Gray once chose a famous line of Vergil as a motto for the Elegy and the grave sweetness of the opening verses is Vergilian. In Vergil's evening line

maioresque cadunt altis de montibus umbrae,

which Philip Hamerton called "soft almost as the falling of the shadows themselves", there is the same atmosphere as in Gray's

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight.
The "lowing herds" are in Vergil's evening also:

aspice aratra iugo referunt suspensa iuveni
et sol crescentes decedens duplicat umbras.

Horace has felt the beauty of these lines and in one of his rare Vergilian passages imitates them

sol ubi montium
mutaret umbras et iuga demeret
bobus fatigatis, amicum
tempus agens abeunte curru.

The question of the dependence of Gray's Elegy upon Collins's Ode to Evening is inevitable. Gray began the Elegy in 1742 and it was given to the public in 1750, while Collins's poems were published in 1748. Considering Gray's intellectual habit, I am convinced that his second quatrain was modelled on Collins's stanza:

Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat
With short, shrill shriek, flits by on leathern wing
Or where the beetle winds his small, but sullen horn.

The "moping owl" is Vergil's (cf. Georgics 1.402-403):

solis et occasum servans de culmine summo
nequiquam seros exercet noctua cantus.

Lucretius, whom he knew well, has lent Gray his famous passage 3.894ff.:

Iam iam non domus accipiet te laeta neque uxor
optima nec dulces occurrent oscula nati
praeripere.

Horace, too, has contributed stanzas from Odes 2.14 and 4.9 for verses 21-24 and 57-60.

And so we could go on through the great part of the poem. Dr. Johnson says roughly of another poem "Criticism disdains to chase a school-boy to his common-places". But the pursuit of the elements which go to make up the wonderful mosaic of Gray's style increases our wonder at his enormous learning, his mastery of the great literatures of his own

¹ W. J. Courthope.

times, as well as those of Greece and Rome, and at his high poetic gift which could fuse into a stately and beautiful whole what he had gathered from so many sources. Professor Woodberry has lately said of Gray that his work reminds him "most often of the minor craftsmanship of the Greek artisans who made of common clay for common use the images and funeral urns; such seems to me," he says, "to be the material of the poems, but in form how perfect they are, both for grace and dignity". The figure seems to me not to fit the art of Gray, who worked not with humble material, but with the splendid phrases of his great predecessors. That with this method he avoids being ornate and overlaid is a marvel due to the exquisite refinement of his poetic nature. "I love a little finery", Gray said on the occasion of finding the jonquils and jessamine-powdered wig of a certain Lord too fine even for him. But his own poetic splendors are not spoiled by the fineries of literature fashionable in his century. His *curiosa felicitas* of taste and phrase has saved him in that path of imitation of the world-great poets, where so many have failed. Professor Woodberry has lately called him a minor poet. That is not the rank to give the author of the Elegy, whose "divine truisms" express for learned and unlearned alike the great and inevitable thought of life. It is not the rank for the poet of whom his severe critic the poet Swinburne has said "As an elegiac poet, Gray holds for all ages to come his unassailable and sovereign position".

I have called him Vergilian. He chose Vergil's great line so often quoted

Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt.

for the motto of his Elegy. A study of his Latin verses shows how deeply he is imbued with Vergil and how this exercise of Latin verse-writing has formed the English style of an English poet. Vergil and Gray are alike in the delicate sensitiveness of their natures, their power to adapt and make their own the high thoughts and noble phrases of past generations, and in their tender melancholy. They are poets of a distinguished and rare order, possible only in ages of great cultivation, but not robbed of their great poetic gift by the artificiality and erudition of their age. Sententious and epigrammatic like his contemporaries, Gray is yet lifted far above the brilliancy and wit of his time, which he also shared, by the "pietas" of his nature, which is so akin to that of Vergil.

VASSAR COLLEGE.

GRACE HARRIET MACURDY.

MEETINGS

The eleventh season of The New York Latin Club successfully opened on November nineteenth with a luncheon at The Gregorian. The accommodations there provided were more satisfactory than those

which the Club has enjoyed elsewhere. The attendance of about seventy members at this initial meeting of the year augurs well for the Club's continued prosperity.

At the close of the luncheon, the President, Mr. E. W. Harter of Erasmus Hall High School, happily introduced the guest of honor and speaker of the occasion, Dr. Herbert Weir Smyth, Eliot Professor of Greek in Harvard University, who spoke on the theme, *Graecia Capta*. He emphasized the fact that not only should there be no hostility between the friends of Greek studies and of Roman studies but that they should make common cause, since the two fields of literature are contiguous and complementary. The teacher of one should be versed in both, and study in one demands constant reading in the other. Latin literature can not be appreciated aright without knowledge of the Greek sources of inspiration, nor can the influence of Greek masterpieces be estimated without familiarity with their Latin counterparts. The one which is subsequent to the other supplements and continues it in open admiration and without rivalry. Captive Greece led captive her conquerors, and the Roman military masters of the world did not chafe against the intellectual supremacy of Hellenic culture.

There have been but two great driving engines of the world's thought—the Hebraic and the Hellenic minds. Rome's service to humanity may be likened to that of a converter or transmitter which receives and distributes to countless other recipients the power which the engines have generated. The address throughout was illuminated by examples drawn from classical writers of prose and verse, but especial heed was given to Vergil and his great indebtedness to the Greek poets.

One aspect of the address was particularly interesting to a Latinist, the fact that, though Professor Smyth inevitably laid stress on the indebtedness of the Roman writers, both in prose and verse, to their Greek predecessors, he also, to a degree as refreshing as it was astonishing in an address of a Hellenist, emphasized the *independence* and originality of the Latin authors, especially Vergil. Nor did he content himself here with merely general remarks; he indicated specifically, with most illuminating comments, matters wherein, to his mind, that originality consisted. Indeed, one of the most striking things said by him was that the *independence* of the Latin authors is best intelligible to him who knows the Greek authors best.

ANNA P. MACVAY, Censor.

The Washington Classical Club held the first meeting of the year on Saturday, November fifth, at The Friends' School, the home of Mr. Sidwell, the President of the Club. The following officers were elected: President, Professor Mitchell Carroll; Vice-Presidents, Rev. Henry J. Shandelle, S. J., Professor George I. Raymond, Father Maguire, Miss H. May Johnson; Secretary-Treasurer, Miss M. Elsie Turner; four additional members of the Executive Committee, Mr. Thomas W. Sidwell, Professor Charles S. Smith, Mr. E. T. Gregg, Miss Mildred Dean. Four new members were admitted to the Club.

Professor Mitchell Carroll gave a very interesting address, illustrated with the stereopticon, on The Activities of the American Schools in Athens and Rome. He appealed especially to teachers in secondary schools urging them to use the art of the ancients as a means of approach to their languages.